



5225 Hwy 10 W., Airport Box 16 Missoula, MT 59808

Phone: 406-728-9363
Fax: 406-728-6981

02/16/11

EXHIBIT 1
DATE 2/16/11
HB 468

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL NO. 468
MICHAEL M. MAMUZICH, VICE-PRESIDENT
MINUTEMAN AVIATION, INC.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear and present testimony of this important legislation. My name is Michael Mamuzich and I am Vice-President for Minuteman Aviation, Inc. located in Missoula.

I am here to express our deep concern over the large and ever increasing fleet of aircraft, both helicopter and fixed-wing, that the DNRC operate. This fleet continues to grow in usage and size even though the State is trying to find ways to cut budgets in these lean times.

Minuteman Aviation, Inc. has been in business here in the State since 1963 paying thousands of dollars in state taxes, providing jobs to 50 plus employees and spending money in the local communities. It frustrates us that we invest much time and money in our operations to be put into direct competition with state government run programs that operate on taxpayer's money.

We have already seen the results of this competition in our operations. We used to provide aerial fire detection with 3 fixed wing aircraft on the Lolo National Forest and Flathead National Forest. Now the State provides this service and we parked our aircraft and laid off the pilots. We provided a helicopter under contract to the Lolo National Forest for years for fire fighting and now the State parks a helicopter in Missoula for this mission.

We are not in this position alone as other experienced operators in the state are faced with the same competition against our tax dollars. Millions of dollars are spent by the State on so called "free" surplus helicopters and fixed wing for refurbishment, modifications, parts, fuel, oil, support trucks, hangers, pilots and mechanics. All of this could be done more economically and effectively by the private sector, which only charges the customer when services are actually provided. It would be easy to downsize the DNRC Aviation's program by utilizing private operators through exclusive use contracts in areas of high fire risk and call when needed contracts when fire danger is at extremes.

In conclusion, to keep from eroding private enterprise, of which this nation was built on, I ask you to support Bill 468 and pass it into law.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Mamuzich
Vice-President
Minuteman Aviation, Inc.
mai@montana.com